

He was a market/betere atte fulle;
Ther dorste no wight hand upon hym legge,
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
THEEF he was forsooth of corn and mele,
And that a sly and usaunt for to stele.
His name was hooted deynous Symkyn.
A wyf he hadde, ycomen of noble kyn;
The person of the toun hir fader was;
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras
for that Symkyn sholde in his blood allye.
She was yfostred in a nonnerye;
for Symkyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
But she were wel ynoriased and a mayde,
To saven his estaat of yomanrye;
And she was proud and peert as is a pye.
A ful fair sighte was it upon hem two
On haly dayes; biforn hire wolde he go
With his typet ybounde about his heed,
And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same.
Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but Dame;
Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
That with hire dorste rage, or ones pleye,
But if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn
With panade, or with knyf, or boidekyn;
for jalous folk ben perilous everemo;
Algate they wolde hire wywes wenden so.
And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich,
As ful of hoker, and of bisemare.
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hire spare,
What for hire kynrede and hir nortelrie
That she hadde lerned in the nonnerie.
DOUGHTER hadde they bitwixe hem two
Of twenty yee, withouten any mo,
Savyng a child that was of half yee age;
In cradel it lay, and was a propre page.
This wenche thikke and wel ygrowen was,
With kamuse nose, and eyen greye as glas;
Buttokes brode, and brestes rounde and hye,
But right fair was hire heer, I wol nat lye.
This person of the toun, for she was feir,
In purpos was to maken hire his heir,
Both of his catel and his mesuage,
And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
His purpos was for to bistowe hire hie
Into som worthy blood of auncetrye;
for hooly chirches good moot been despended
On hooly chirches blood, that is descended;
Therefore he wolde his hooly blood honoure,
Though that he hooly chirche sholde devoure.
Gret sokene hath this millere, out of doute,
With whete and malt of al the land aboute;
And nameliche, ther was a greet collegge,
Men clepen the Soler Halle at Cantebregge;
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt ygrounde.
And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye.
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye;
for which this millere stal bothe mele and corn
An hundred tyme moore than biforn;
for ther biforn he stal but curteisly,
But now he was a theef outrageously;

for which the wardeyn chidde and made fare;
But therof sette the millere nat a tare;
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.
JHANNE were ther yonge powre clerkes two,
That dwelten in this halle of which I seye;
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye;
And, conly for hire myrthe and revelrye,
Upon the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yewe hem leve, but a litel stounde,
To goon to mille and seen hir corn ygrounde.
And hardily they dorste leye hir nekke,
The millere shold nat stele hem half a pekke
Of corn, by sleighte, ne by force hem reve.
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
John highte that oon, & Aleyn highte that oother;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
fer in the North, I kan nat telle where.
This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he cast anon.
With good sward and with bokeler by hir side,
John knew the wey, hem neddede no gyde;
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.
Aleyn spak first, Al hayl, Symond, yfayth!
How fares thy faire doghter, and thy wyf?
Aleyn! welcome, quod Symkyn, by my tyf!
And John also, how now? What do ye heer?
Symond, quod John, by God, nede has na peer,
Hym boes serve hymselfe that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Oure maniple, I hope he will be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed;
And forthy is I come, and eek Aleyn,
To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn.
I pray yow spede us heythen that ye may.
It shal be doon, quod Symkyn, by my fay!
What wol ye doon whil that it is in hande?
By God, right by the hopur wil I stande,
Quod John, and se how that the corn gas in;
Yet saugh I nevere, by my fader kyn,
How that the hopur waggis til and fra.
Aleyn answerde, Johan, wiltow swa?
Channe wil I be byneth, by my croun!
And se how that the mele falles down
Into the trough; that sal be my disport;
for John, yfayth, I may ben of youre sort,
I is as ille a millere as ye ye.
This millere smyled of hir nyctee,
And thoghte, Al this nys doon but for a
wyle;
They wene that no man may hem bigile;
But by my thrift, yet shal I bliere hir eye,
for al the sleighte in hir philosophye.
The moore queynte cokes that they make,
The moore wol I stele whan I take.
Insteede of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren;
The gretteste clerkes been noght wisest men,
As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare;
Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.
AT at the dore he gooth ful pryvely,
Whan that he saugh his tyme, softely.
He looketh up and down til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood ybounde

Bihynde the mille, under a levesel;
And to the hors he goth hym faire and wel;
He strepeth of the brydel right anon,
And whan the hors was laus he gynneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
forth with Alehe! thurgh thikke & thurgh thenne.
This millere gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
But dooth his note and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that hir corn was faire and weel ygrounde;
And whan the mele is sakked and ybounde,
This John goth out, and fynt his hors away,
And gan to crie, harrow! and, Weylaway!
Our hors is lorn; Aleyn, for Goddes banes
stepe on thy feet; com out man, al at anes!
Alas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn!
This Aleyn al forgat bothe mele and corn;
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrie.
What, whilk way is he geen? he gan to crie.
The wyf cam lepyng in ward with a ren;
She seyde, Alas, youre hors goth to the fen
With wild mares, as faste as he may go;
Unthank come on his hand that boond hym so,
And he that bettre sholde han knyrt the reyne.
Alas, quod John, Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
Lay down thy sward, and I wil myn als wa;
Is ful wight, God waat, as is a raa;
By Goddes herte! he sal nat scape us bathe.
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
Alhayl, by God, Aleyn, thou is a fonne.
Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John;
And whan the millere saugh that they
were gon,
He half a busschel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
He seyde, I trowe the clerkes were aferd,
Yet kan a millere make a clerkes berd
for al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye.
Lo wher they goon; ye, lat the children pleye;
They gete hym nat so lightly, by my croun!
This sely clerkes rennen up and doun
With, Keepe! keepe! stand! stand! Jossa,
wardere!
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe hym heere.
But shortly, til that it was verray nyght
They koude nat, though they do al hir myght,
hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,
Til in a dych they caughte hym atte laste.
Mery and weet, as beest is in the reyn,
Comth sely John, and with him comth Aleyn.
Alas! quod John, the day that I was born!
Now are we dryve til hethyng and til scorn;
Oure corn is stoln, men wil us foolles calle,
Bathe the wardeyn and oure felawes alle,
And namely the millere; weylaway!
Thus pleyneith John as he gooth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond.
The millere sittynge by the fire he fond,
for it was nyght, and forther myghte they noght;
But for the love of God they hym bisoght
Of herberwe and of ese as for hir peny.
The millere seyde agayn, If ther be eny,
Swich as it is, yet shal ye have youre part;

Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
Ye konne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
Lat se now if this place may suffise,
Or make it rowm with speche as is youre gise.
Now Symond, seyde John, by Seint Cutberd,
Ay is thou myrie, and this is faire answerd.
I have herd seyde, Man sal taa of twa thynges,
Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he brynges;
But specially I pray thee, hooste deere,
Get us som mete and drynke, and make us cheere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle;
With empty hand men may none haukes tulle;
Lo, heere our silver, redy for to spende.
This millere into toun his doghter sende
for ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And boond hire hors, it sholde nat goon
loos;
And in his owene chambre hem made a bed,
With sheetes and with chalons faire yspred,
Noght from his owene bed ten foot or twelve.
His doghter hadde a bed al by herselfe,
Right in the same chambre, by and by,
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
They soupen, and they speke, hem to solace,
And drynken evere strong ale atte beste.
Aboute mydnyght wente they to reste.
This millere vernysshed his heed;
ful pale he was fordronken, and nat reed.
He yexeth, & hespeketh thurgh the nose,
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bedde he goth, and with hym goth his wyf,
As any jay she light was and jolyf;
So was hir joly whistle wel ywet.
The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to yewe the child to sowhe;
And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,
To bedde went the doghter right anon;
To bedde wente Aleyn, and also John,
Ther nas na moore; hem nedede no dwale.
This millere hath so wisely bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleepe;
Ne of his tayl bihynde he took no keepe.
His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,
Men myghte hir rowtyng heere two furlong;
The wenche rowteth eek, par compaignye.
ALEYN the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked John, and seyde, Slepestow?
Herdtow evere slyk a sang er now?
Lo, whilk a complying is ymel hem alle!
A wilde fyr upon thair bodyes falle!
Alha herked evere slyk a ferly thyng?
Ye, they sal have the flour of il endyng!
This lange nyght ther tydes me na reste,
But yet, nafors, al sal be for the beste,
for, John, seyde he, als evere moot I thryve,
If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.
Som esement has lawe yshapen us;
for John, ther is a lawe that says thus,
That gif a man in a point be ygreved,
That in another he sal be releved.
Oure corn is stoln, shortly it is ne nay,